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FOR NEA/ELA (RANA AND ALLEN)
OES FOR WIREC ACTION GROUP (SPECHT, HILL)

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SUBJECT: Strong Jordanian Interest in Attending WIREC 2008

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B) AMMAN 2442

¶1. Post highly recommends that Jordan be invited to join the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC) scheduled for March 2008. The Government of Jordan (GOJ) has expressed strong interest in attending the WIREC, as renewable energy is key to its national energy strategy, and Jordan needs every opportunity available to build and share knowledge in this field. According to Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MEMR) Secretary General Khaldoun Qutishat, an official WIREC delegation

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from Jordan would most likely include the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources; the Minister of Environment; the Secretary General of the Higher Council of Science and Technology (HCST), de facto the Science Ministry; the Head of the National Energy Center; and the Jordanian Ambassador to the United States. The HCST Secretary General will be in Washington November 6-7, and will most

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likely raise the WIREC during a meeting with PDAS Harnish, U.S. co-chair for the JCM.

¶2. Jordan is a country with no oil resources and growing energy demands that currently account for 22% of Jordan's GDP. As a result, King Abdullah created a royal committee led by Prince Hamzah Bin Al Hussein to review the GOJ's national energy strategy which should be finalized within the next month. MEMR has indicated that renewable energy will figure prominently in the new strategy.

¶3. Qutishat also noted that the GOJ has already drafted a new renewable energy law that it plans to submit to parliament when it reconvenes after legislative elections in November. The law would allow for the establishment of a multi-million dollar renewable energy fund to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy, for which \$3 million has already been pledged.

¶4. In addition to several wind projects currently underway in Jordan, the GOJ is also exploring projects to turn solid waste to energy, a nuclear energy program, and solar energy projects (ref B). A U.S. consultancy team led by Sam Odeh, CEO of the Global Energy American Coalition of Companies, has also been advising Jordan at the GOJ's request on the potential of using ethanol.

¶5. The Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) also views renewable energy as one of the critical areas for research and development in Jordan. Jordan is keen to set up a renewable energy working group under the recently signed bilateral Science and Technology (S&T) Agreement, and the S&T Joint Commission Meeting (JCM), currently scheduled for January 2008, could lead to the establishment of such a group.

¶6. Given the above reasons, post believes that Jordan could be a key contributor to dialogue, a model in the region, and significant benefactor of information gained in the WIREC meetings.

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